



HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER ONE MOUNTAIN TEMPLE

57 Hartford Street, San Francisco, California, 94114. (415)863-2507

— WINTER 94/95 —

HSZC is a neighborhood Zen Temple. It is also called Issan-ji, One Mountain Temple, after its founder Issan Dorsey Roshi. The center was started in 1980 and has offered a regular practice schedule since then. In residence is Abbot Zenshin Philip Whalen who takes care of the practice and teaching. Zenshin is available for dokusan (practice interviews) to answer questions and discuss student's practice. Please make appointments with him in advance.

HSZC NEWS

Our burning issue at HSZC is how to raise revenue. We need to develop operating capital and a monetary reserve, and to make some vital repairs to the building structure.

Maitri hospice has located a new site, and is negotiating to purchase it, government funding pending. HSZC now faces a rough transition period back to being a self sufficient Zen center. The board is working on strategies to prevent HSZC's demise.

A possible new source of revenue to pay our mortgage and expenses, besides membership and donation generosity, is the rental of the two upstairs rooms at 57 Hartford Street. A fire exit is required to bring building safety up to code and permit rental of the 3rd floor rooms. This item is on our SURVIVAL LIST.

Marty is investigating options like folding ladders, which cost about \$3,000. But because the building surface is not flush, two balconies might need to be installed which would cost between \$5,000-7,000 for parts and labor.

Another way to generate revenue would be to rent space on a nightly basis to therapy or spiritual groups,

which is already happening to a limited degree.

HSZC needs to establish pro bono or low cost legal and accounting advice and services. Does anyone have suggestions?

The Fire Exit is our most pressing project, but a long term WANT LIST for HSZC has also been identified. Future projects include a new furnace which will create more space in the zendo for sitting, and a new zendo floor. Eventually the building will need a new foundation at a cost of 50 to 60 thousand dollars.

On Membership- there are two levels: Supporting and Practicing. Those wishing to support the temple are encouraged to become annual members at \$20 a year- they will receive newsletters by mail. Practicing members sit regularly, attend dokusan with Zenshin, and contribute \$40 per month/sliding scale.

Welcome to our new sangha members- Jim Warhol, Mark Ewert, Richard Ryan, Tim Bridges, Ron Wickliffe, and D Allen. D took the responsibility leap quickly, he is now our most regular doan/bell ringer.

Ken Ireland has generously offered to donate 5% of his monthly income to HSZC.

The elegant flower arrangements that grace our altar are a donation from Gary Weiss, who owns the sophisticated plant store IXIA, located at 2331 Market St. near Noe.



HSZC treasurer Marty Kidwell is now enrolled at Meiji College of Oriental Medicine, and Don Herald has volunteered to help with bookkeeping and banking.

INTERVIEW WITH MAITRI'S GEORGE HURD.

JB: How did you end up here, as executive director of Maitri Aids hospice? What led you to this?

GH: I was an orthodox catholic priest for a period of years, then skewed towards a more commercialized style and was with Bank of America for about six years. I came to be primary caregiver for a lover of mine who died of AIDS. I got very active in this community and decided to give my services full time.

JB: What challenges did you face as you stepped in as director of Maitri last April? It has a history of short term executive directors - you're the seventh director since 1989.

GH: What Maitri required was someone with a different skill set and expertise to deal with the changing licensing demands and relocation issues for a community hospice in San Francisco. So the skills changed somewhat and the structure of the organization changed. Maitri now needs a facility that will accomodate 15 residents as opposed to the eight here now.

There are currently only three residential hospices in San Francisco, Coming Home Hospice, Zen Center Hospice and Maitri. Maitri is the only residential hospice that is entirely AIDS dedicated. Hopefully this will change soon. For projections between now and 1997 we are looking at an average of 1800 AIDS related deaths a year, while the city currently has only 21 available hospice beds, with waiting lists for each of up to 40 names. People with less than 6 months to live often wait up to two months for a bed. This is part of the reason we are relocating.

The second major challenge is that licensing regulations for care facilities have altered. And this building, even if we rehab it at a very high cost to bring it up to

safety code, could still not be licensed for more than 6 beds. Victorians are all vertical buildings with narrow stairways everywhere. Now we have no elevators, no lifts, and a beautiful garden out back that residents can't get to.

JB: So Maitri has found a new site?

GH: Yes. We've just begun negotiations for the building at 401 Duboce, which is still in the greater Castro neighborhood. Open Hand is already on the first floor. We looked at three sites, then brought the fire marshalls and building inspectors through. The site on Duboce was the only one really licensible.

The second floor in the building on Duboce is 10,000 sq. feet. A big square. The inside is more institutional than here, but we can change that. We have some great designs for an onfloor garden, sky lights and murals, common areas accessible by all residents, and some sort of guest capability for out of towners, especially in the last few weeks.

There is already a ramp to the second floor because it used to be a service garage. This site can accomodate more people, while keeping the scale of what we are doing manageable so that it's not a hospital ward. Each resident will have a private room that they can personalize.

Although we are expanding and moving from a Victorian environment, there is a very firm commitment on the part of our board and staff to transplant the very special energy that makes Maitri what it is - residential and homelike with a spiritual ambiance that Issan and this Zen center set into motion.

JB: How do you think this special energy will transplant to the new location?

GH: Its very much in the people and the commitment. I'm aware that some of it is quite intangible - like the fact of sharing the space with HSZC has a lot to do with the general aura of energy here. But there is a really clear awareness that the board has and staff and the volunteers too, a dedication to bring that with us when we relocate. We are not going to take HSZC with us, but the commitment to spiritual values is embodied in the

residential focus and homelike caring-- all these qualities will be transplanted.

JB: Do you see Maitri being here another year?

GH: At least another year, we've only just begun negotiations. Now we need to gain control of the site with either a long term lease or deposit. And there is federal money available, which is targeted for the acquisition of buildings for residential programs.

JB: In this remaining year how do you see the relationship between HSZC and Maitri changing?

GH: We are committed to strengthening and maintaining the spiritual connection to HSZC, but the legal ties will continue to change. Maitri incorporated last year as its own non-profit private entity for tax exemption purposes. HSZC still has oversight authority and is the only member of the Maitri Corporation. This obviously will need to change as we relocate.

JB: Some people feel that the HSZC sangha is not supportive enough of Maitri, in terms of volunteers etc...

GH: This is all second hand stuff because I wasn't here, but I have a sense that Issan's original idea for Maitri was that the Zen center students and residents in particular, would provide care for the hospice residents. And that worked for a while largely because of Issan's presence and his energy.

But the burnout factor and the shifting of focus from a meditative and contemplative community into a more service oriented and active relationship caused difficulty because some people didn't want it. And it's very hard to live in a hospice. So for a variety of reasons it became necessary for more separation. But when I look at our volunteer list my sense is that there are very strong ties with HSZC. Not so much as a formal entity, but in terms of resources, energy and spirit, and we will continue that.

JB: As Maitri splits away from HSZC, it's bound to bring up fear of change for both entities. An identity crisis. What kind of separation issues do you anticipate?

GH: It's good for HSZC to remember

that the Zen center was here before Maitri and will continue to be here after Maitri is gone. There is a pragmatic fear on the part of the Zen center because Maitri kind of took over the space, paid expenses etc. HSZC will have to resume this on their own.

On the part of Maitri there is a fear **now** about losing the core energy of operating in a contemplative environment, plus attachment to the location itself. But it's not a problem to relocate as long as we stay committed to transplanting the energy with us. We have to keep in mind that the new facility is more appropriate for our evolving needs. And the new space will have a zendo location.

-Jennifer Birkett

MAITRI NEWS

There are currently 8 residents. 6 in the 61 building and 2 in 57. Gill is the most senior resident, since January/94. Frank arrived in Feb/94, and Dan aka Kitty/artist, pagan god and drag queen moved in Aug. 1/94. Dave is the friendly guy who sits on the porch of #61 for hours at a time, out-sitting those in the meditation hall at 6pm.

In August there was an Installation Ceremony for a Tibetan prayer flag made especially for Maitri. It was a gift from Nyingma Institute in Berkeley. A memorial service was held at the same time, and as night fell, Abbot Zenshin stepped off the path to let Kitty get by, and slipped. His voice rang out loudly, "that's the second time I've fallen off the world today." Abbot in the Abyss!

In September Khandro Rinpoche, incarnation of the wife of the 15th Karmapa, came by to visit Maitri. She said that in India the response to AIDS is at least 10 years behind the West. Rinpoche called on Patrick Glennon to speak for the Buddhist Aids community at her evening talk on AIDS in the Community-- Compassion and Skillful Means. Patrick said her message was simple and deep-- compassion is about listening.

Fund raising: 1. There is a United Way campaign coming up and you can designate Maitri as benefactor of your donations. 2. A capital drive is being planned for the new location. 3. You can make donations of clothing and furniture to Community Thrift Store on Valencia at 17th St. Specify account #155 HSZC/Maitri.

The Allen Ginsberg benefit in September raised \$1900 for Maitri. And a Benefit at the Marsh Theater saw one nights proceeds donated by the playwright Bob Gordon, who is a long time Maitri volunteer.

TEMPLE HISTORY: The Story of the Mountain Seat.

The term "Mountain Seat" refers to the position of abbot of a temple. The title Mountain Seat pertains to the fact that Zen masters were often named after the mountain on which their temple resided. Our center, in the shadow of Twin Peaks, takes its designation from Issan's Buddhist name, One Mountain Great Peace.

November 4, 1989 was the first official Mountain Seat Ceremony at HSZC.

As Issan took the seat he said - "Our practice at One Mountain Temple is settling into closeness with each other, so we can know completely we have bonds with each other that are more important than birth or death."

Although spiritual leader for longer, Issan was abbot of the temple for only 10 months. During this time he juggled the requirements of orchestrating the daily meditation schedule with the grass roots expansion of Maitri AIDS hospice. By August 1990 Issan's health had declined rapidly from AIDS related conditions. On September 1st Issan passed over the abbotship to Kijun Steven Allen, in the temple's second Mountain Seat Ceremony.

David Schneider describes the ceremony in his book, STREET ZEN. "As Steve approached the abbot's seat he paused and turned to Issan. "Only for you would I sit here," he said.

"You're the only one I would ask to do it," Issan replied.

Steve then "climbed the Mountain Seat"...Steve then made...the traditional admission of being unready for the job. He asked for everyone's help in carrying on Issan's work, and he promised to do all he could himself. He closed with a spontaneous poem:

Sitting on this seat is like being in a tornado in the eye of a hurricane."

Issan died five days later on September 6, 1990. Kijun's summit remarks proved prophetic- Issan's loss saw a time of grief, confusion and struggle. Kijun Steve Allen was required to be both resident spiritual director and hospice director, tasks which are now split into different positions.

Steve passed the abbot's position to Zenshin Ryufu after one year and a week. On Saturday, September 14, 1991, Zenshin Philip Whalen was installed as One Mountain Temple's third abbot.

From TRICYCLE/Summer 1994. "An assembly comprised of...practitioners... from both Zen and Vajrayana traditions, poets..., long-time friends, local chroniclers, disciples from Hartford Street's AIDS hospice, were present for the ceremony in the basement meditation hall.

Zenshin formally accepted the abbot's seat, staff and horse-tail whisk with the words,

"The seat is empty. There is no one sitting in it. Please take good care of yourself."

Later that same September 1991, Zenshin performed jukai/lay initiation for Bob Ebert, Ken Ireland and Mike Gallagher. Then Ted Petrella who had received jukai from Issan in December, 1989, was given tokudo/priest ordination from Zenshin in June 1992.

On May 23rd, 1993 Zenshin gave jukai to Patrick Glennon and Frank Masson. Patrick received the name Genzan Hokai, Dark Mountain Dharma Ocean. Frank received the name Rhuzan Myokai, Dragon Mountain Shining Ocean. Houn Mike Gallagher received tokudo in June 1993. Houn died in September.

The tornado phase of One Mountain Temple has calmed into a wind storm. Zenshin's constant presence has stabilized the practice community.

The sangha must take care of their own practice. Maitri has taken on its own direction.

Zenshin has held the abbot's position for over three years. He can be found each evening before zazen in the living room, dressed impeccably in his robes. His natural quirky cantankerous presence is a relief after daily inner urban shockwaves of life in the late 20th century. One evening he might expound on how Alice in Wonderland is repressed by the logic of the adult world, or playfully wonder - why do bumble bee's fly? Its aeronautically impossible...

Or on Zen...Some old guy from India is leading you all down the garden path. He should be ashamed of himself...Put your mind in the belly, in your breath...We all live in this strange tension...Go into the zendo...Is it the dragon's mouth or the theater? Depends on the day."

Excerpts from an Interview with Zenshin Whalen:.

JB: How did you end up at HSZC?

Z: Issan asked me to come here and help take care of the zendo. He could work the morning hours, but was getting weaker, couldn't do the evening. This was late 1988. I moved in January 1, 1989.

JB: What does your Buddhist name mean?

Z: Ryufu Zenshin. Zenshin means Zen Mind or Zen Heart. Ryufu means Dragon Wind. In one translation it was, Imperial Influence or Universal Influence.

JB: What was Issan's vision for HSZC?

Z: He wanted it to be a functioning zen temple, with regular meditation and ceremonies. To make it available to people here in this community, in the Castro.

As sangha member JD became sicker and his lover Pierre found it increasingly difficult to care for him at home, Issan decided to invite JD to live at HSZC and then flashed on the idea that he had to take care of people right NOW. Then Bernie was brought in too, he was in terrible shape, he moved into the room upstairs.

JB: Then Steve Kijun took over the Mountain Seat, did he share this same vision?

Z: Steve just wanted to help Issan, he is Issan's dharma heir. Steve just wanted to do what he could for Issan.

JB: When Steve took the Mountain Seat he said - its like being a tornado in the eye of a hurricane. As the events unfolded it seems as if the tornado image was a really accurate description of those times right after Issan's death.

Z: Yes it was. People were pulling in different directions. A lot of really complicated heavy scenes were taking place between the people living here, working here and sitting here. It was a very heavy scene.

JB: Then Steve asked you to take over. Did you want to be Abbot?

Z: No. I prefer to be a background person, taking care of the practice.

JB: When you took the Mountain seat you said - the chair is empty, take care of yourself. It sounds really zen. What did you mean by this?

Z: I meant there is no abbot, there is no person there, empty in the sense of empty of form. The chair is form and the one on the chair is empty. Also I was thinking of something from a Gertrude Stein book called the World is Round, where this little girl climbs up to the top of a mountain and finds a red chair.

JB: What is your vision for Hartford Street Zen Center?

Z: Well a neighborhood zendo. A more stable group, a larger group so that we have people who are trained to hit bells, and cook for sesshin. This would be ideal, especially priests to do this. I hope for the development of regular people to participate in zazen, dokusan, and sesshin - ways we can really get into zen.

JB: Right now we don't seem to have a regular contingent of bell ringers and incense carriers. How do you feel about this? Sometimes its a free for all just before zazen, one person hitting the han, another doing the bells. I've even seen you carry down your own incense to the zendo after lighting it on the gas stove because somebody borrowed the altar matches to light their cigarette.

Z: Its all right. I can handle the

incense. We are getting people trained. I just don't like people coming in 20 minutes late for zazen.

JB: This place is often described as a gay zen temple...

Z: The thing is that this is a neighborhood Zen temple where anybody can come. Its not obligatory to be gay to sit here. But we are all dealing with the realities of this neighborhood in a very real way.

HSZC SCHEDULE

MORNING:

Monday to Saturday: Zazen-5:00 to 5:40am. Kinhen- 5:40 to 5:50am
Zazen-5:50 to 6:30am. Service.

EVENING:

Monday to Friday: Zazen-6:00 to 6:40pm. Service.

ZENDO PROTOCOL: Arrive 5 minutes before zazen. Bow as you enter the sitting area and when crossing in front of the altar. Once seated and the bell has rung, be as still as possible.

SATURDAY: Informal ZAZEN 9:10 to 10am.
DHARMA talk 10am. Tea and discussion.
Donation appreciated.

MONDAY: Introduction to ZAZEN and ZENDO. Call first. 5:00pm.

DINNER is open to public MONDAY night after zazen. \$5 donation.

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

DHARMA TALK: First TUESDAY evening each month. See bulletin board by zendo entrance for details.

MEMORIAL SERVICE for Temple Founder, Issan Dorsey Roshi. 6th day of each month.

OTHER GROUPS MEETING AT HSZC

DHARMA SISTER'S SITTING GROUP: 7:20 to 8pm alternating Tuesday and Wednesday. Call 415-826-7990.

GAY BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP: Hosts HIV+ practice/discussion group. Call 415-974-9878 for details.

SF MINDFULNESS COMMUNITY: Students of Thich Nhat Hahn. 2nd and 4th Sunday, 9:30 to 12:30. Meditation, discussion. 1st and 3rd Monday, 7 to 9pm. Tapes, Meditation. Information call Barbara di Pietro, 415-864-2449.

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